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THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

A COMEDY;

IN FIVE ACTS.

By RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, Esq.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LONDON.

DUBLIN.

Sir Peter Teazle...Mr. KING,	Mr. RYDER,
Sir Oliver Surface...Mr. YATES,	Mr. VANDERMERE,
Joseph Surface.....Mr. PALMER,	Mr. CLINCH,
Charles Surface.....Mr. SMITH,	Mr. WILKES,
Snake.....Mr. PACKER,	Mr. BENNET,
Rowley.....Mr. AICKEN,	Mr. DAWSON,
Moses.....Mr. BADDELY,	Mr. BARRETT,
Careless.....Mr. FARREN,	Mr. OWENSON,
Sir Toby Bumper....Mr. VERNON,	Mr.
Trip.....Mr. LAMASH,	Mr. G. DAWSON,
Sir Ben. Backbite....Mr. DODD,	Mr. G. BANNISTER,
Crabtree.....Mr. PARSONS,	Mr. REMINGTON.

Lady Teazle.....Mrs. ABINGTON,	Mrs. LYSTER,
Lady Sneerwell...Miss SHERRY,	Mrs. HANNAM,
Mrs. Candour.....Miss POPE,	Mrs. HITCHCOCK,
Maria.....Mrs. BRERETON,	Miss HUDSON.



THE
SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

LADY SNEERWELL *at the Dressing Table* ; Mr. SNAKE
drinking Chocolate.

Lady Sneer. The paragraphs you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted.

Snake. They were, Madam, and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneer. Did you circulate the reports of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That is in as fine a train as your Ladyship could wish ; in the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackit's ears within four-and-twenty hours, and then you know the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneer. Why truly, Mrs. Clackit has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, Madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day—To my knowledge she has been the

cause of six matches being broke off, and three sons being disinherited; of four forced elopements—as many close confinements—nine separate maintenances, and two divorces, nay I have more than once traced her causing a tête-a-tête in the Town and Country Magazine, when the parties perhaps had never seen each others' faces before in the course of their lives,

Lady Sneer. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true—She generally designs well, has a free tongue, and a bold invention; but her colouring is too dark, and her outline often extravagant; she wants that delicacy of hint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your Ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneer. Ah! you are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least—every body allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word, or a look, than many can with the most laboured detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts—wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural—But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have employed me, wherein I confess I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneer. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbour, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family.

Snake. I do—here are are two young men to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death—The eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character—

The former an avowed admirer of your Ladyship's, and apparently your favourite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her; now on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a City Knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectation as Mr. Surface, and more so, why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneer. Then at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady Sneer. His real attachment is to Maria or her fortune, but finding his brother a favoured rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success?

Lady Sneer. Heavens! how dull you are, cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto through shame have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles, that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I am thus anxious, and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice every thing.

Snake. Now, indeed your conduct appears consistent, but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneer. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious; in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance he passes for a miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Nay, Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in

England, and above all he praises him as a *Man of Sentiment*.

Lady Sneer. True, and with the assistance of sentiments, and hypocrisy, he has brought him entirely into his interest with regard to Maria, while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though I fear he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Mr. Surface.—

Lady Sneer. Shew him up. [Exit SERVANT.
He generally calls about this time, I don't wonder at people's giving him to me for a lover.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Jos. Sur. My dear Lady Sneerwell how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake your most obedient.

Lady Sneer. Snake has just been arraigning me on our mutual attachment, but I have informed him of our real views.—You know how useful he has been to us, and believe me the confidence is not ill-placed.

Jos. Sur. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, no compliments now, but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria, or what is more material to me, your brother?

Jos. Sur. I have not seen either since I left you, but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneer. Ah, my dear Snake the merit of this belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Sur. Every hour, I am told he has had another execution in his house yesterday, in short his dissipation and extravagance exceed every thing I ever heard of.

Lady Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Sur. True. Madam, notwithstanding his vices, one cannot help feeling for him—Aye, poor Charles indeed—I am sure I wish it was in my power to be of any essential service to him. For the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct deserves——

Lady Sncer. O lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

Jos. Sur. Egad that's true—I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter—however it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine—who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by one of your Ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming; I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you: Mr. Surface your most obedient. [*Exit SNAKE.*]

Jos. Sur. Sir, your very devoted—Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneer. Why so?

Jos. Sur. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with Old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never you know been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Sur. Nothing more likely, take my word for it, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow has not virtue enough to be faithful or constant even to his own villainy—hah Maria!

Enter MARIA.

Lady Sneer. Maria my dear, how do you do? what's the matter?

Maria. O there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's with his odious uncle Crabtree, so I slipt out, and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Sur. If my brother Charles had been of the party, Madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneer. Nay now, you are severe, for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard you were here. But my dear what has Sir Benjamin done that you should him avoid him so?

Maria. O he has done nothing, but 'tis for what he has said. His conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Jos. Sur. Aye, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him—for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend, and his uncle is as bad.

Lady Sneer. Nay, but we should make allowance, Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Maria. For my part I own Madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice—what do you think, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Sur. Certainly Madam—to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast, is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady Sneer. Pshaw! there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill-nature, malice of a good thing is the barb which makes it stick—what's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Sur. To be sure, Madam, that conversation where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Maria. Well! I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable—but in a man I am sure it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalry, and a thousand little motives to depreciate each other, but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman, before he can traduce one.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and if your Ladyship's at leisure will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneer. Beg her to walk in. Now Maria however here is a character to your taste, for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, every body allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

Maria. Yet with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Sur. I faith tis very true Lady Sneerwell, whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneer. Hush! here she is.

Enter Mrs. CANDOUR.

Mrs. Can. My dear Lady Sneerwell how have you been this century? Mr. Surface what news do you hear? though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but Scandal.

Jos. Sur. Just so indeed Madam.

Mrs. Can. Ah! Maria, child, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? his extravagance I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Maria. I am very sorry ma'am the town have so little to do.

Mrs. Can. True, true child, but there is no stopping people's tongues, I own I was hurt to hear it, as indeed I was to learn from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately so well as could be wished.

Maria. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so—I'm sure such reports are——

Mrs. Can. Very true, child, but what's to be done? People will talk, there's no preventing it—why it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filagree Flirt—but, lord, there is no minding what one hears—though to be sure I had this from very good authority.

Maria. Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Can. So they are child—shameful ! shameful ! But the world is so censorious no character escapes—Lord now ! who would have suspected your friend Miss Prim of an indiscretion ? Yet such is the ill-nature of people that they say her uncle stopped her last week just as she was stepping into the York Diligence with her dancing-master.

Maria. I'll answer for it there are no grounds for the report.

Mrs. Can. O no foundation in the world I dare swear: no more probably than for the story circulated last month of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino, though to be sure that matter was never rightly cleared up.

Jos. Sur. The licence of invention some people take is monstrous indeed !

Maria. 'Tis so—but in my opinion those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Can. To be sure they are : tale-bearers are as bad as tale-makers—'tis an old observation and a very true one—but what's to be done as I said before ? how will you prevent people from talking ? To-day Mrs. Clackit assured me Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife like the rest of her acquaintance—She likewise hinted that a certain widow in the next street had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner—and the same time Miss Tattle who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame ; and that Sir Harry Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But lord, do you think I would report these things ? No, no, tale-bearers as I said before are just as bad as tale-makers.

Jos. Sur. Oh, Mrs. Candour, if every body had your forbearance and good-nature !——

Mrs. Can. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs, and when

ugly circumstances come out against one's acquaintances I own I always love to think the best—by the bye, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined.

Jos. Sur. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, Madam.

Mrs. Can. Ah, I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinzes, and Mr. Nickit; all up I hear within this week, so if Charles is undone, he will find half his acquaintances ruined too, and that you know is a consolation.

Jos. Sur. Doubtless, Ma'am, a very great one.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Mr. Crabtree, and Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Lady Sneer. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you—positively you shan't escape.

Enter CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hands—Mrs. Candour I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite—egad Ma'am, he has a pretty wit; and is a pretty poet too—isn't he Lady Sneerwell?

Sir Ben. O fie, uncle!

Crab. Nay, egad 'tis true—I'll back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymer in the kingdom: has your Ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire! do Benjamin repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore, at Mrs. Drowsy's Converzatione—come now, your first is the name of the fish, your second a great Naval Commander—and——

Sir Ben. Uncle—now—pry'see!

Crab. P'faith, Madam, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at these things.

Lady Sneer. I wonder Sir Benjamin you never publish any thing.

Sir Ben. To say truth, Ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print, and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more, by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties—however I have some love elegies which, when favoured with this lady's smiles, I mean to give to the public.

Crab. Fore heaven, Ma'am, they'll immortalize you, you'll be handed down to posterity like Petrarch's Laura, or Waller's Sacharissa.

Sir Ben. Yes, Madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall murmur through a meadow of margin, foregad they will be the most elegant things of their kind—

Crab. But ladies, that's true—have you heard the news?

Mrs. Can. What, Sir, do you mean the report of—

Crab. No, Ma'am, that's not it—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Can. Impossible!

Crab. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. 'Tis very true, Ma'am—every thing is fixed and the wedding livery bespoken.

Crab. Yes, and they do say there were very pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneer. Why I have heard something of this before.

Mrs. Can. It can't be—and I wonder any one should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Ben. O lud Ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once—she has always been so cautious and so reserved that every body was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Can. Why to be sure a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constituti-

ons.—But there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robust character of a hundred prudes.

Sir Ben. True Madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Can. Well, but this may be all a mistake—you know, Sir Benjamin, every trifling circumstance often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crab. That they do, I'll be sworn, Ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover, and her character, last summer, at Tunbridge? Sir Benjamin you remember it?

Sir Ben. Oh, to be sure! the most whimsical circumstance——

Lady Sneer. How was it pray?

Crab. Why one evening at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country; says a lady in company, "I have known instances of it, for Miss Lætitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins." "What!" cries the Dowager Lady Dundizzy, (who you know is as deaf as a post) "has Miss Lætitia Piper had twins?" This mistake as you may imagine threw the whole company into a fit of laughter—however 'twas the next day reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Lætitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl; and in less than a week there were people who could name the father and the farm-house where the babies were put out to nurse.

Lady Sneer. Strange indeed.

Crab. Matter of fact, I assure you—O lud, Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle Sir Oliver is coming home?

Jos. Sur. Not that I know of indeed, Sir.

Crab. He has been in the East Indies a long time, you can scarcely remember him, I believe—sad comfort whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on.

Jos. Sur. Charles has been imprudent Sir, to be sure, but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him—he may reform.

Sir Ben. To be sure he may—For my part I never believed him so utterly void of principle as people say; and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

Crab. That's true, egad nephew; if the Old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an Alderman, no man more popular there—foregad I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish Tontine; and that whenever he is sick they have prayers for the recovery of his health in the Synagogue.

Sir Ben. Yet no man lives in greater splendour—they tell me when he entertains his friends, he can sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities, have a score of tradesmen in the anti-chamber—and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. Sur. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother

Maria. Their malice is intolerable. Lady Sneerwell I must wish you a good morning—I'm not very well. [Exit MARIA.]

Mrs. Can. O dear, she changes colour very much.

Lady Sneer. Do Mrs. Candour follow her, she may want assistance.

Mrs. Can. That I will with all my soul, ma'am, poor dear creature, who knows what her situation may be? [Exit Mrs. CANDOUR.]

Lady Sneer. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Ben. The young lady's penchant is obvious.

Crab. But Benjamin you mus'n't give up the pursuit for that—follow her and put her into good humour—repeat her some of your verses—come I'll assist you.

Sir Ben. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you, but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. O lud! aye! undone as ever man was, can't raise a guinea.

Sir Ben. Every thing sold I am told that was moveable.

Crab. I have seen one that was at his house—not a thing left but some empty bottles, that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscot.

Sir Ben. And I am very sorry to hear also some bad stories against him. *(going.)*

Crab. O he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Ben. But however as he's your brother. *(going.)*

Crab. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

[Exeunt SIR BENJAMIN and CRABTREE.]

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Jos. Sur. And I believe their abuse was no more acceptable to your Ladyship than Maria.

Lady Sneer. I doubt her affections are further engaged than we imagined—but the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing further; in the mean time I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiments. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.

Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Peter. When an old batchelor takes a young wife what is he to expect? 'tis now six months since

Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the miserablest dog ever since. We tift a little going to church, and came to a quarrel before the bells were done ringing—I was more than once nearly choaked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy.—Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country—who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown—nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race-ball—Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grovesnor-square. I am sneered at by my old acquaintance—paragraphed in the news-papers—she dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humours—yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this—however I'll never be weak enough to own it.

Enter ROWLEY.

Row. Oh Sir Peter, your servant—how is it with you, Sir?

Sir Pet. Very bad, Master Rowley—very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Row. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

Sir Pet. A good question to a married man.

Row. Nay, I'm sure Sir Peter, your Lady can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Pet. Why has any body told you she was dead?

Row. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Pet. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley—I am myself the sweetest tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper, and so I tell her an hundred times a day.

Row. Indeed!

Sir Pet. Aye, and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong.—But Lady Sneerwell and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition—then to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband, meaning I suppose to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Row. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen—I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder; for Charles, my life on't he will retrieve his errors yet—their worthy father, once my honoured master, was, at his years nearly as wild a spark, but when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Pet. You are wrong, Master Rowley—On their father's death you know I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, 'till their uncle Sir Oliver's eastern liberality gave them an early independence. Of course no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age—he is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes—but for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grains of virtue by descent, he has dissipated them with the rest of his inheritance. Ah, my old friend Sir Oliver will be deeply mortified, when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Row. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune; I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Sir Pet. What! let me hear?

Row. Sir Oliver is arrived, and at this moment in town.

Sir Pet. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Row. I did not—but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Pet. Egad I shall rejoice to see my old friend; 'tis sixteen years since we met; we have had many a day together—but does he still enjoin me not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Row. Most strictly—he means before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Sir Pet. Ah there needs no art to discover their merits; however he shall have his way—but pray does he know I am married?

Row. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Pet. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption? Ah! Oliver will laugh at me—we used to rail at matrimony together—but he has been steady to his text—well he must be at my house though—I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I disagree.

Row. By no means.

Sir Pet. For I shall never be able to stand Noll's jokes—so I'd have him think, Lord forgive me, that we are a very happy couple.

Row. I understand you—but then you must be very careful not to differ while he's in the house with you.

Sir Pet. Egad, and so we must—and that's impossible—ah! Master Rowley, when an old batchelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no, the crime carries the punishment along with it. [Exeunt.]

End of the First Act.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

*Sir Peter Teazle's House.**Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE.**Sir Pet.* Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it.*Lady T.* Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please—but I ought to have my own way in every thing, and what's more, I will too—What, though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.*Sir Pet.* Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?*Lady T.* Authority! no, to be sure—if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me; I am sure you are old enough.*Sir Pet.* Old enough! Aye, there it is—well, well, Lady Teazle though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance.*Lady T.* My extravagance? I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.*Sir Pet.* No, no, Madam; you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife—to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter, as would suffice to turn the Parthenon into a green-house, and give a Fête Champêtre at Christmas.*Lady T.* Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame, because flowers are dear in cold weather; you should find fault with the climate and not with me. For my part

I am sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet.

Sir Pet. Oons! Madam, if you had been born to this, I should not wonder at your talking thus—But you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady T. No, no, I don't—'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, Madam—you were then somewhat in an humbler style.—The daughter of a plain country 'squire; recollect, Lady Teazle, when I first saw you sitting at your tambour in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side; your hair combed smoothly over a roll; and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted of your own working.

Lady T. O yes, I remember it very well, and a curious life I led! my daily occupation—to inspect the dairy; superintend the poultry; make extracts from the family receipt book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, Madam; 'twas so indeed.

Lady T. And then you know my evening amusements; to draw patterns for ruffles which I had not the materials to make; to play pope-joan with the curate; read a sermon to my aunt, or be stuck down to an old spinnet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Pet. I am glad you have so good a memory; yes, Madam, these were the recreations I took you from. But now you must have your coach, vis-à-vis, and three powdered footmen before your chair—and in summer a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington gardens; no recollection I suppose when you were content to ride double behind the butler on a docked coach-horse?

Lady T. No, I swear I never did that—I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Pet. This, Madam, was your situation; and

what have I not done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank; in short, I have made you *my wife*.

Lady T. Well then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation—and that is——

Sir Pet. My widow, I suppose?

Lady T. Hem! hem!

Sir Pet. Thank you, Madam—but don't flatter yourself; for though your ill-conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart I promise you—However I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady T. Then why will you endeavour to make yourself so disagreeable to me! and thwart me in every little elegant expence?

Sir Pet. 'Slife, madam, I say had you any of these elegant expences when you married me?

Lady T. Lord, Sir Peter, would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Pet. The fashion indeed! what had you to do with the fashion when you married me?

Lady T. For my part I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Aye, there again—taste—Zounds, Madam! you had no taste when you married me.

Lady T. That's very true indeed, Sir Peter; and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow; but now Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's?

Sir Pet. Aye, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there.

Lady T. Nay, Sir Peter, they are people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, egad they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance! for they don't choose any body should have a character but themselves—such a crew!

ah ! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle, who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales—coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

Lady T. What, would you restrain the freedom of speech ?

Sir Pet. Oh, they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady T. Why I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace, but I vow I have no malice against the people I abuse ; when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humour ; and I take it for granted they'll deal exactly in the same manner with me.—But Sir Peter you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

Sir Pet. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

Lady T. Then indeed you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late ; so good bye to you. [*Exit.*]

Sir Pet. Soh ! I have gained much by my intended expostulations ; yet with what a charming air she contradicts every thing I say, and how pleasingly she shews her contempt of my authority. Well, though I cannot make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her ; and I think she never appears to such advantage, as when she's doing every thing in her power to plague me. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Lady Sneerwell's House.

LADY SNEERWELL, MRS. CANDOUR, CRABTREE, SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, and JOSEPH SURFACE, discovered ; Servants attending with Tea.

Lady Sneer. Nay, positively we will have it.

Jos. Sur. Yes, yes, the epigram by all means.

Sir Ben. O plague on't uncle—'tis mere nonsense.

Crab. No, no—foregad very clever for an extempore.

Sir Ben. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance—You must know that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curriclè was taking the dust in Hyde-park in a sort of duodecimo phaeton; she desired me to write some verses on her ponies, upon which I took out my pocket-book and in one moment produced the following:—

“ *Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies,
Other horses are clowns, and these macaronies;
Nay, to give them this title I’m sure is not wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.*”

Crab. There ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

Jos. Sur. A very Phœbus mounted indeed, *Sir Benjamin.*

Sir Ben. O dear Sir—trifles—trifles!

Enter LADY TEAZLE and MARIA.

Mrs. Can. I must have a copy.

Lady Sneer. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see *Sir Peter.*

Lady T. I believe he’ll wait on your Ladyship presently.

Lady Sneer. Maria, my dear, you look grave—come you shall sit down to picquet with Mr. Surface.

Maria. I take very little pleasure in cards; however I’ll do as your Ladyship pleases.

Lady T. I am surprised, Mr. Surface should sit down with her—I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before *Sir Peter* came.

Mrs. Can. Now I’ll die but you are so scandalous; I’ll forswear your society.

Lady T. What’s the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Can. They’ll not allow our friend, Miss Vermillion, to be handsome.

Lady Sneer. O surely, she’s a pretty woman.

Crab. I’m very glad you think so, Madam.

Mrs. Can. She has a charming fresh colour.

Lady T. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Can. Oh fie! I'll swear her colour is natural—I have seen it come and go.

Lady T. I dare swear you have, Ma'am; it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! How I hate to hear you talk so—but surely now her sister *is* or *was* very handsome.

Crab. Who, Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! She's six and fifty if she's an hour.

Mrs. Can. Now positively you wrong her, fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost, and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Ben. O there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the Widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.

Sir Ben. Nay now Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the Widow. Come, come; it is not that the Widow paints so ill, but when she has finished her face, she joins it on so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur discovers at once, that the head is modern, though the trunk's antique.

Crab. Ha! ha! ha! well said, nephew.

Mrs. Can. Well you make me laugh, but I vow I hate you for't. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Ben. Why she has very pretty teeth.

Lady T. Yes, and on that account when she is neither speaking nor laughing, which very seldom happens, she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a jar as it were.

Mrs. Can. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady T. I'll allow that's better than the pains Mrs.

Prim takes to conceal her losses in front—she draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a Poor-box; and all her words appear to slide out edgeways.

Lady Sneer. Very well, Lady Teazle, I see you can be a little severe,

Lady T. In defence of a friend it is but justice—but here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. Ladies, your most obedient—Mercy on me here is the whole set—a character dead at every word, I suppose.

Mrs. Can. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter; they have been so censorious, they'll allow good qualities to nobody—not even good-nature to our friend, Mrs. Pursey.

Lady T. What, the fat Dowager, who was at Mrs. Codille's last night?

Mrs. Can. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneer. That's very true, indeed.

Lady T. Yes, I know she almost lives upon acids and small whey, laces herself by pullies, and often in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat poney, with her hair platted up behind like a drummer; and puffing round the ring in a full trot.

Mrs. Can. I thank you Lady Teazle, for defending her.

Sir Pet. Yes, a good defence truly.

Mrs. Can. But, Sir Benjamin is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

Crab. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious; an aukward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

Mrs. Can. Positively you shall not be so severe, Miss Sallow is a relation of mine by marriage, and as

for her person, great allowance is to be made, for let me tell you a woman labours under many disadvantages, who tries to pass for a girl at six and thirty.

Lady Sneer. Though surely she is handsome still, and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle-light, it is not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Can. True, and then as to her manner, upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education; for you know her mother was a Welch Milliner, and her father a Sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Ben. Ah you are both of you too good-natured.

Sir Pet. Yes, damn'd good-natured—this is their own relation, mercy on me!

Sir Ben. And Mrs. Candour is of so moral a turn.

Mrs. Can. Well, I will never join in ridiculing a friend—and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you well know what pretensions she has to be critical in beauty.

Crab. Oh, to be sure; she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Ben. She has indeed an Irish front.

Crab. Caledonian locks.

Sir Ben. Dutch nose.

Crab. Austrian lip.

Sir Ben. Complexion of a Spaniard.

Crab. And teeth á-lá Chinois.

Sir Ben. In short, her face resembles a Table d'hôte at Spa, where no two guests are of a nation.

Crab. Or a Congress at the close of a general war, where all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest; and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Mercy on my life! a person they dine with twice a week.

Mrs. Can. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so, for give me leave to say that Mrs. Ogle—

Sir Pet. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon, there is no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues; but when I tell you Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

Lady Sncer. Well said, Sir Peter, but you are a cruel creature,—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow it in others.

Sir Pet. Ah! madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your Ladyship is aware of.

Lady T. True, Sir Peter, I believe they are so near of kin, they can never be united.

Sir Ben. Oh! rather ma'am, suppose them man and wife, because one so seldom sees them together.

Lady T. But, Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by Parliament.

Sir Peter. 'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as the poaching on manors, and pass an *act for the preservation of fame*, I believe many would thank them for the *bill*.

Lady Sncer. O lud! Sir Peter, would you deprive us of our privileges?

Sir Pet. Aye, madam, and then no person should be permitted to kill characters or run down reputations but qualified old maids, and disappointed widows.

Lady Sncer. Go, you monster!

Mrs. Can. But sure you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Pet. Yes, madam, I would have law,—merchant for them too,—and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crab. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Lady Sneer. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter SERVANT, who whisper's SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. I'll be with them directly: I'll get away unperceived. (going)

Lady Sneer. Sir Peter, you are not leaving us?

Sir Peter. Your Ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business—but I'll leave my character behind me. [Exit.]

Sir Ben. Well, certainly Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being—I would tell you some stories of him that would make you laugh heartily, if he was'nt your husband

Lady T. O pray don't mind that—come do let's hear them. [They retire.]

JOSEPH SURFACE and MARIA come forward.

Jos. Sur. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

Maria. How is it possible I should? if to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities and misfortunes of those who have never injured us, be the province of wit or humour, heaven grant me a double portion of dullness.

Jos. Sur. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

Maria. Then is their conduct more inexcusable—for, in my opinion, nothing but a depravity of heart could tempt them to such practices.

Jos. Sur. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others and be unkind to me alone; is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Maria. Why will you distress me by renewing the subject.

Jos. Sur. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus and oppose your guardian's, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favoured rival.

Maria. Ungenerously urged! but whatever my sentiments of that unfortunate young man are, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up, because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

[*LADY TEAZLE returns.*

Jos. Sur. Nay, but Maria, do not leave me with a frown—by all that's honest, I swear——Gad's life here is Lady Teazle, (*aside*) You must not—no, you shall not, for though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle——

Maria. Lady Teazle!

Jos. Sur. Yet were Sir Peter once to suspect—

Lady T. What's this, pray? Does he take her for me? Child, you are wanted in the next room. What's all this, pray?

[*Exit MARIA.*

Jos. Sur. O the most unlucky circumstance in nature.—Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern which I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavouring to reason with her when you came.

Lady T. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender method of reasoning—do you usually argue on your knees?

Jos. Sur. O she's a child; and I thought a little bombast—but Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady T. No, no, I begin to think it would be imprudent: and you know I admit you as a lover, no further than fashion requires.

Jos. Sur. True, a mere platonic cicisbeo, whatever wife is entitled to.

Lady T. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion—however I have so many of my country prejudices left, that though Sir Peter's ill-humour may vex me ever so, it shall never provoke me to——

Jos. Sur. The only revenge in your power—well I applaud your moderation.

Lady T. Go, you are an insinuating wretch—but we shall be missed; let us join the company.

Jos. Sur. But we had best not return together.

Lady T. Well don't stay, for Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. [*Exit.*

Jos. Sur. (solus) A curious dilemma truly my politics have run me into—I wanted at first only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover! sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many rogueries, that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Enter ROWLEY and SIR OLIVER.

Sir Oli. Ha! ha! ha! and so my old friend is married, hey! a young wife out of the country, ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into husband at last.

Row. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oli. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance—Poor Peter!—But you say he has entirely given up Charles? Never sees him, hey?

Row. His prejudice against him is astonishing; and I'm sure greatly encreased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has been industriously led into by a scandalous society in the neighbourhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name, whereas the truth is I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favourite.

Sir Oli. Aye, I know there is a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has years to know the value of it—but I am not to be prejudiced against

my nephew by such, I promise you—no, no, if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Row. Then my life on't you will reclaim him—ah, Sir, it gives me new life to find that your heart is not turned against him; and that the son of my good old master has one friend however left.

Sir Oli. What, shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad my brother and I were neither very prudent youths; and yet I believe you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Row. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family—But here comes, Sir Peter.

Sir Oli. Egad, so he does; mercy on me! he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read husband in his face at this distance.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. Ha! Sir Oliver, my old friend, welcome to England a thousand times.

Sir Oli. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter—and i'faith I'm as glad to find you well, believe me.

Sir Pet. Ah! 'tis a long time since we met—Sixteen years I doubt Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oli. Aye, I have had my share—but what, I find you are married, hey, my old boy!—well, well, it can't be help'd, and so I wish you joy with all my heart.

Sir Pet. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver;—yes, I have entered into the happy state—but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oli. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting; no, no, no.

Row. Take care, pray, sir. *(to Sir Oliver.)*

Sir Oli. So, one of my nephews I find is a wild extravagant young rogue, hey!

Sir Pet. Wild! ah my old friend I grieve for your disappointment there—he's a lost young man indeed: however his brother will make you amends; Joseph is indeed what a youth should be—every body in the world speaks well of him.

Sir Oli. I am sorry to hear it—he has too good a character to be an honest fellow—Every body speaks well of him! Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools, as to the honest dignity of genius or virtue.

Sir Pet. What, Sir Oliver, do you blame him for not making enemies.

Sir Oli. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Pet. Well, well, you'll be convinced when you know him; 'tis edification to hear him converse. He possesses the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oli. O plague of his sentiments!—If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly—but however don't mistake me, Sir Peter, I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts—and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Row. And Sir Peter shall own he has been for once mistaken.

Sir Pet. O my life on Joseph's honour.

Sir Oli. Well, come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink your Lady's good health, and tell you all our scheme.

Sir Pet. Allons then.

Sir Oli. And don't Sir Peter be so severe against your old friend's son.—Odds my life! I'm not sorry that he has run out of the course a little—for my part I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth—'Tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree. [Exeunt.

End of the Second Act.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

*Sir Peter Teazle's House.**Enter* SIR PETER, SIR OLIVER, and ROWLEY.

Sir Pet. Well then, we will see this fellow first and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jest of your scheme.

Row. Why, Sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother, he was once a Merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied by letter since his confinement, both to Mr. Surface and Charles—from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do, and he is at this time endeavouring to raise a sum of money; part of which in the midst of his own distresses, I know, he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Oli. Ah! he is my brother's son.

Sir Pet. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to—

Row. Why, Sir, I will inform Charles and his brother, that Stanley has obtained permission to apply in person to his friends, and as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging at least of the benevolence of their dispositions; and believe me, Sir, you will find in the youngest brother, one, who in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still as our immortal bard expresses it—

“A tear for pity,

“And a hand open as day for melting charity.”

Sir Pet. Pshaw! what signifies his having an open hand, or a purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial if you please—but where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine relative to Charles's affairs?

Row. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who to do him justice, has done every thing in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Pet. Pray let us have him in.

Row. Desire Mr. Moses to walk up stairs.

Sir Pet. But pray why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Row. Oh, I have convinced him he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived—so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interest. I have also another evidence in my power, one *Snake*; whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery—and shall shortly produce him to remove some of *your* prejudices, Sir Peter, relative to Charles and Lady Teazle.

Sir Pet. I have heard too much on that subject.

Row. Here comes the honest Israelite.

Enter MOSES.

Row. This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oli. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew, Charles?

Moses. Yes, Sir Oliver—I done all my power for him, but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oli. That was unlucky truly; for you have had no opportunity of shewing your talents.

Moses. None atal—I had not the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oli. Unfortunate indeed! but I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Moses. Yes, he knows that; this very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will I believe advance him some money.

Sir Pet. What, one Charles never had money from before?

Moses. Yes, Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Pet. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me—Charles you say does'nt know Mr. Premium?

Moses. Not atal.

Sir Pet. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have an opportunity of satisfying yourself better than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation—go with my friend Moses and represent Mr. Premium, and then I'll answer for't you will see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oli. Egad I like this idea better than the other; and I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Sir Pet. True, so you may.

Row. Well, this is taking Charles at a disadvantage to be sure; however Moses you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful.

Moses. You may depend upon me—this is near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oli. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses; but hold, I forgot one thing: how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Moses. There is no need—the principal is Christian.

Sir Oli. Is he? I am sorry to hear it—but then again a'n't I too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?

Sir Pet. Not atal—'twould not be out of character if you went in your own carriage, would it Moses?

Moses. Not in the least.

Sir Oli. Well, but how must I talk? there's certainly some cant of usury, and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Pet. O there's not much to learn—the great

point as I take it is, to be exorbitant enough in your demands, hey Moses?

Moses. Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oli. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that, I'll ask him eight, or ten per cent, upon the loan, at least.

Moses. If you ask him no more as dat, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oli. Hey! what a plague! how much then?

Moses. That depends upon circumstances, if he appears not very anxious for the supply you should require only forty or fifty per cent, but if you find him in great distress, and want the monies very bad, you may ask him double.

Sir Pet. A good honest trade you are learning, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oli. Truly, I think so; and not unprofitable.

Moses. Then you know, you haven't the monies yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of a friend.

Sir Oli. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Moses. Yes, and your friend is an unconscionable dog, but you can't help it.

Sir Oli. My friend is an unconscionable dog, is he?

Moses. Yes, and he himself has not the monies by him; but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oli. He's forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? well, that's very kind of him.

Sir Pet. P'faith, Sir Oliver, Mr. Premium I mean, you'll soon be master of the trade.

Sir Oli. Right, right! well, Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Pet. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oli. O never fear; my tutor appears so able that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault, if I'm not a complete rogue before I turn the corner. [Exeunt SIR OLIVER and MOSES.

Sir Pet. So now I think Sir Oliver will be convinced you are partial; Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Row. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Well, go bring me this Snake: and I'll hear what he has to say presently—I see Maria, and want to speak with her. [Exit ROWLEY.]

I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph; I am determined I will do it: he will give me his opinion sincerely.

Enter MARIA.

Sir Pet. So child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Maria. No, Sir, he was engaged.

Sir Pet. Well, Maria, do you not reflect the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Maria. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely; you compel me to declare that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Pet. Soh! here's perverseness! no, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer; 'tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Maria. This is unkind, Sir; you know I have obeyed you in neither seeing, nor corresponding with him—I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard; yet I cannot think it culpable, if while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Pet. Well, well, pity him as much as you please, but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Maria. Never to his brother.

Sir Pet. Go, perverse and obstinate! but take care,

Madam, you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is; do not compel me to inform you of it.

Maria. I can only say you shall not have just reason—'tis true by my father's will, I am for a short period, bound to regard you as his substitute, but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable. [Exit MARIA.]

Sir Pet. Was there ever man so crossed as I am! every thing conspiring to fret me. I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight before her father, a hale and hearty man died, on purpose I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. But here comes my help-mate—she appears in great good humour; how happy I should be if I could teaze her into loving me though but a little.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady T. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria? It isn't using me well to be ill-humoured when I'm not by.

Sir Pet. Ah! Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humoured at all times.

Lady T. I am sure I wish I had: for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment—do be good-humoured now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Pet. Two hundred pounds! what, a'nt I to be in a good humour without paying for it?—but speak to me thus, and i'faith there's nothing I would refuse you?—You shall have it, but seal me a bond for the re-payment.

Lady T. Oh no!—there's my note of hand will do as well.

Sir Pet. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement—I mean shortly to surprise you—but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady T. If you please—I'm sure I do not care how

soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Pet. Well then, let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging,

Lady T. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you, you look now as you did before we were married! when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would; and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing, didn't you?

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive.—

Lady T. Aye so I was,—and would always take your part when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Pet. Indeed!

Lady T. Aye, and when my cousin Sophy called you a stiff peevish old batchelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said I didn't think you so ugly by any means.

Sir Pet. Thank you!

Lady T. And that I dared say you would make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. And you prophesied right—and we shall certainly now be the happiest couple——

Lady T. And never differ again,

Sir Pet. No, never—though at the same time indeed my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very narrowly, for in all our little quarrels, my dear,—if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady T. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter, indeed you always gave the provocation.

Sir Pet. Now see my angel, contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady T. Then don't you begin it my love.

Sir Pet. There now—you—you are going on, you

don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady T. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason——

Sir Pet. There now, you want to quarrel again.

Lady T. No, I'm sure I don't, but if you will be so peevish——

Sir Pet. There, *now* who begins first?

Lady T. Why you to be sure, I said nothing, but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Pet. No, no, Madam, the fault is in your own temper.

Lady T. Aye, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be——

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gypsy.

Lady T. And you a great bear to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more.

Lady T. So much the better.

Sir Pet. No, no, Madam, 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you: a pert, rural coquette that had refused half the honest squires in the neighbourhood.

Lady T. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling batchelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Sir Pet. Aye, aye, Madam, but you were pleased enough to listen to me—you never had such an offer before.

Lady T. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who every body said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

Sir Pet. Oh! oh! oh! I have done with you, Madam, you are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of every thing; I believe you capable of any

thing that's bad.—Yes, Madam, I now believe the report relative to you and Charles, Madam—Madam—yes Madam, you and Charles, not without grounds.

Lady T. Take care, Sir Peter, you had better not insinuate any such thing—I'll not be suspected without a cause I promise you.

Sir Pet. Very well, Madam, very well, a separate maintenance as soon as you please—yes Madam, or a divorce—I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old batchelors. Let us separate Madam.

Lady T. Agreed, agreed. And now my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more,—we may be the happiest couple, and never differ again, you know, ha! ha! well you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you, so bye, bye. [*Exit.*]

Sir Pet. Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry either? O, I am the miserablest fellow! but I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper.—No, she may break my heart, but she shall not keep her temper. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Charles's House.—A Chamber.

Enter TRIP, MOSES, and SIR OLIVER.

Trip. Here, Master, Master, if you will stay a moment I'll try whether—what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oli. Mr. Moses what is my name?

Moses. Mr. Premium.

Trip. Premium—very well.— [*Exit, taking Snuff.*]

Sir Oli. To judge by the servants, one would believe the master was ruined—but what! sure this was my brother's house!

Moses. Yes, Sir, Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c. just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a great piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oli. In my mind the other's œconomy in selling it him was more reprehensible by half.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. My Master says you must wait, gentlemen, he has company and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oli. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he wouldn't have sent such a message.

Trip. Yes, yes, Sir, he knows you are here, I didn't forget little Premium, no, no, no.—

Sir Oli. Very well, and I pray Sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, Sir,—my name is Trip at your service.

Sir Oli. Well then Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of a place here I guess?

Trip. Why yes—here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough, but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear, and not very good either, but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oli. Bags and bouquets! Halters and bastinadoes.

Trip. But à-propos Moses! have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oli. Wants to raise money too—mercy on me! has his distresses I warrant like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

Moses. 'Twas not to be done indeed Mr. Trip.

Trip. Good lack! you surprise me,—my friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he puts his mark to the back of a bill 'twas as good as cash.

Moses. No, 'twouldn't do.

Trip. A small sum—but twenty pounds.—Hark'ee, Moses do you think you could get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oli. An annuity! ha! ha! ha! a footman raise money by annuity! well done luxury, egad!

Moses. But you must insure your place.

Trip. O with all my heart, I'll insure my place,—and my life too if you please.

Sir Oli. It's more than I would your neck,

Moses. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why nothing capital of my Master's wardrobe has dropped lately—but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter-cloaths; with equity and redemption before November: or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit on the blue and silver.—These, I should think Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security; hey my little fellow?

Moses. Well, well——

[*Bell rings.*

Trip. Egad I heard the bell—I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you: don't forget the annuity, little Moses—This way, gentlemen; insure my place, you know!

Sir Oli. If the man be the shadow of the master this is the temple of dissipation indeed! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

CHARLES, CARELESS, SIR TOBY BUMPER, &c. discovered at a Table drinking wine.

Charles. 'Fore heaven 'tis true—there's the great degeneracy of the age; many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but plague on't they won't drink.

Care. It is so indeed, Charles; they give into all the substantial luxuries of the table and abstain from nothing but wine and wit.

Charles. O certainly society suffers by it intolerably, for now instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright burgundy, their conversation is become just like the spa-water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of champaign without its spirit or flavour.

1st Gent. But what are they to do, who love play better than wine?

Care. True; there's Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

Charles. Then he'll have the worst of it—what! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? for my part, egad, I am now never so succesful as when I am a little merry; let me throw on a bottle of champaign and I never lose, at least I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

2d Gent. Aye, that I believe.

Charles. And then what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats at top, is the maid that has bewitched you.

Care. Now then Charles be honest, and give us your real favourite.

Charles. Why I have withheld her only in compassion to you; if I toast her you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible on earth.

Care. O then! we'll find some canonized vestals, or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant.

Charles. Here then, bumpers you rogues—bumpers—Maria, Maria!

1st Gent. Maria who?

Charles. O damn the surname; 'tis too formal to be registered in love's calendar—but now Sir Toby beware, we must have beauty's superlative.

Care. Nay never study Sir Toby, we'll stand to the toast though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

Sir Toby. Egad so I have—and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.

SONG AND CHORUS.

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen,

Here's to the widow of fifty,

Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,

And here's to the House-wife that's thrifty:

CHORUS

Let the toast pass,

Drink to the lass,

I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize,

Now to the maid who has none, Sir,

Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,

And here's to the nymph with but one, Sir,

Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow,

Now to her that's as brown as a berry,

Here's to the wife with her face full of woe,

And now for the damsel that's merry;

Let the toast pass, &c.

For let them be clumsy, or let them be slim

Young or ancient I care not a feather,

So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,

And let us e'en toast them together:

Let the toast pass, &c.

All. Bravo! Bravo!

Enter TRIP, who whispers CHARLES.

Charles. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little; Careless, take the chair, will you?

Care. Nay, pr'ythee Charles; what now—this is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose has dropt in by chance.

Charles. No, faith—to tell you the truth 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Care. O damn it let's have the Jew in.

1st Gent. Aye, and the broker too, by all means.

2d Gent. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

Charles. Egad with all my heart—Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in: (*Exit Trip*) though there's one of them a stranger I can assure you.

Care. Charles, let us give them some generous burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

Charles. O hang'em; no, wine does but draw forth forth the natural qualities of a man; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter TRIP, SIR OLIVER, and MOSES.

Charles. So, honest Moses, walk in; walk in pray, Mr. Premium; that's the gentleman's name, isn't it Moses?

Moses. Yes, Sir.

Charles. Set chairs, Trip; sit down, Mr. Premium

glasses, Trip—sit down, Moses—come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's success to usury—Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Moses. Success to usury.

Care. Right, Moses; usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oli. Then here's all the success it deserves.

Care. No, no; that won't do, Mr. Premium; you have demurred to the toast, and must drink it in a pint-bumper.

1st Gent. A pint-bumper at least.

Moses. O pray Sir, consider Mr Premium's a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine.

2d Gent. Give Moses a quart-glass; this is mutiny and a high contempt of the chair.

Care. Here now for't; I'll see justice done to the last drop of my bottle.

Sir Oli. Nay, pray gentlemen; I did not expect this usage.

Charles. No, hang it, Careless, you shan't, Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Sir Oli. Odd, I wish I was well out of their company.

Care. Plague on them then; if they won't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come Harry, the dice are in the next room; Charles you'll join us when you've finished your business with these gentlemen.

[*Exeunt SIR TOBY, and GENT.*]

Charles. I will, I will.—Careless!

Care. Well.

Charles. Perhaps I may want you.

Care. O you know I am always ready: word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. [*Exit CARELESS.*]

Moses. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honour and secresy, and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is—

Charles. Pshaw! have done—Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression; he'll be an hour giving us our titles—Mr. Premium,

the plain state of the matter is this, I am an extravagant young fellow who wants money to borrow; you, I take to be a prudent old fellow who has got money to lend; I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent sooner than not have it, and *you* I presume are rogue enough to take an hundred if you could get it: now Sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without any further ceremony.

Sir Oli. Exceeding frank upon my word—I see, Sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Charles. O no Sir, plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oli. Sir, I like you the better for't; however you are mistaken in one thing, I have no money to lend; but I believe I could procure some of a friend, but then he's an unconscionable dog; isn't he, Moses? and must sell stock to accommodate you; musn't he, Moses?

Moses. Yes, indeed; you know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie.

Charles. Right! people that speak the truth generally do: but these are trifles, Mr. Premium—what, I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't.

Sir Oli. Well, but what security could you give? you have no land I suppose?

Charles. Not a mole-hill; nor a twig: but what's in beau-pots out at the window.

Sir Oli. Nor any stock, I presume?

Charles. Nothing but live-stock, and that's only a few pointers and ponies.—But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

Sir Oli. Why to say truth I am.

Charles. Then you must know that I have a devilish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oli. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more I believe than you can tell.

Charles. O no! there can be no doubt; they tell me

I'm a prodigious favourite, and that he talks of leaving me every thing.

Sir Oli. Indeed! this is the first I have heard of it.

Charles. Yes, yes, 'tis just so; Moses knows 'tis true; don't you Moses?

Moses. O yes, I'll swear to it.

Sir Oli. Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

Charles. Now I propose Mr. Premium, if it is agreeable to you, to grant you a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life,—tho' at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me, that I give you my word, I should be very sorry to hear any thing had happened to him.

Sir Oli. Not more than I should I assure you. But the bond you mention, happens to be just the worst security you could offer me: for I might live to an hundred, and never recover the principal.

Charles. O yes you would, the moment Sir Oliver dies you know you would come on me for the money.

Sir Oli. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Charles. What, I suppose, you are afraid Sir Oliver is too good a life?

Sir Oli. No indeed I am not; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Charles. There again you are misinformed; no, no, the climate has hurt him considerably—Poor uncle Oliver! Yes, he breaks apace, I am told, and so much altered lately that his nearest relations would not know him.

Sir Oli. No? ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his relations would not know him, ha! ha! ha! that's droll, egad, ha! ha! ha!

Charles. Ha! ha! ha! you're glad to hear that little Premium?

Sir Oli. No, no, I am not.

Charles. Yes, yes, you are; ha! ha! ha! you know that mends your chance.

Sir Oli. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over; nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Charles. Pshaw! sure I must know better than you whether he's coming or not; no, no, rely on't he is at this moment at Calcutta: isn't he Moses?

Moses. Yes, certainly.

Sir Oli. Very true, as you say; you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority; havn't I Moses?

Moses. Yes, most undoubtedly.

Sir Oli. But Sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you would dispose of?

Charles. How do you mean?

Sir Oli. For instance now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Charles. O lud! that's gone long ago, Moses can tell you how better than I.

Sir Oli. Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation bowls! then it was also supposed his library was one of the most valuable and complete.

Charles. Yes, yes, so it was, vastly too much so for a private gentleman, for my part I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oli. Mercy on me! learning that had run in the family like an heir-loom; pray what are become of the books?

Charles. You must enquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you there.

Moses. I know nothing of books.

Sir Oli. So, so, nothing of the family property left I suppose.

Charles. Not much indeed, unless you have a mind to the family pictures—I have got a room full of ancestors above, and if you have a taste for old paintings, egad you shall have them a bargain.

Sir Oli. Hey! the devil! sure you won't sell your forefathers, would you?

Charles. Every man of them to the best bidder.

Sir Oli. What, your great uncles and aunts?

Charles. Yes, and my grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oli. Now I give him up—what the plague have you no bowels for your kindred? Odd's life! do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Charles. Nay my little broker don't be angry; what need you care if you have your money's worth.

Sir Oli. Well, I'll be the purchaser; I think I can dispose of the family canvass. Oh! I'll never forgive him this—never—

Enter CARELESS.

Care. Come Charles, what keeps you?

Charles. I can't come yet, i'faith: we are going to have a sale above—here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors.

Care. O burn your ancestors!

Charles. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases; stay Careless we want you, egad you shall be auctioneer, so come along with us,

Care. O, have with you, if that's the case; I can handle a hammer as well as a dice-box—a-going—a-going, &c.

Sir Oli. Oh the profligates!

Charles. Come, Moses. you shall be appraiser, if we want one—Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

Sir Oli. O yes I do vastly; ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha! Oh the prodigal! (*aside.*)

Charles. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance, if he can't make free with his own relations?

Sir Oli. I'll never forgive him! never! never!

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the Third Act.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

*Picture Room at Charles's House.**Enter CHARLES, SIR OLIVER, MOSES and CARELESS.*

Charles. Walk in gentlemen, walk in pray: here they are, the family of the Surfaces up to the conquest.

Sir Oli. And in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Charles. Aye, aye, they are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting, no volunteer grace or expression, not like the works of your modern Raphael, who gives you the strongest resemblance, yet contrives to make your own portrait independent of you, so that you may sink the original and not hurt the pictures,—no, no, the merit of these is the inveterate likeness; all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature beside.

Sir Oli. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Charles. I hope not; well you see Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But, come go to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer—here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's, will answer the purpose.

Care. Ay, ay, this will do; but Charles I have ne'er a hammer, and what's an auctioneer without his hammer.

Charles. Egad that's true; what parchment have we here? Richard heir to Thomas—O our genealogy in full.—Here Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany—here's the family tree for you, you

rogue; this shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oli. What an unnatural rogue! an *ex post facto* parricide!

Care. Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation indeed; 'faith Charles this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business: for 'twill serve not only as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. But come, begin, a-going, a-going—a-going—

Charles. Bravo Careless! Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day I assure you; he served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet—what say you Mr. Premium, look at him, there's a hero; not cut out of his feathers as your modern clipt captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be—What do you bid?

Sir Oli. Bid him speak—(*aside to Moses.*)

Moses. Mr. Premium would have you speak.

Charles. Why then he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oli. Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds! very well, Sir; I take him at that.

Charles. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard: here now is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness; there she is you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock; you shall have her at five pounds ten; the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oli. Ah poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself—five pounds ten—she is mine.

Charles. Knock down my aunt Deborah.—This now is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit, what do you rate him at, Moses?

Moses. Four guineas.

Charles. Four guineas! gads life you don't bid me the price of his wig—Mr. Premium you have more

respect for the woolsack, do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oli. By all means.

Care. Gone.

Charles. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esqs. both members of parliament, and noted speakers; and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought and sold.

Sir Oli. That is very extraordinary indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of parliament.

Care. Well said little Premium; I'll knock them down at forty.

Charles. Here's a jolly fellow, I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Norwich; take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oli. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

Charles. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen into the bargain.

Sir Oli. They are mine.

Charles. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen; but plague on't we shall be all day retailing in this manner: do let us deal wholesale—what say you Premium, give me three hundred pounds, and take all that remains on each side in the lump.

Sir Oli. Well, well, any thing to accommodate you; they are mine—but their is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Care. What! that little ill-looking fellow over the settee?

Sir Oli. Yes, Sir; I mean that, though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow by any means.

Charles. What that! Oh that's my uncle Oliver—'twas done before he went to India.

Care. Your uncle Oliver! Gad then you'll never be friends Charles; that now to me is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw—an unforgiving eye, and

damned disinheriting countenance; an inveterate knave depend on't—don't you think so little Premium?

Sir Oli. Upon my soul, Sir, I do not—I think it as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive; but I suppose your uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber.

Charles. No, hang it, I'll not part with poor Noll; the old fellow has been very good to me, and egad I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

Sir Oli. The rogue's my nephew after all! But, Sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Charles. I'm sorry for't: for you certainly will not have it—Oons! havn't you got enough of 'em.

Sir Oli. I forgive him every thing!—But, Sir, when I take a whim in my head I don't value money; I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Charles. Don't teize me, Master Broker; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end on't.

Sir Oli. How like his father the dog is—well, well, I have done—I did perceive it before—but I never saw such a resemblance. Well, Sir, here's a draft for the sum.

Charles. Why 'tis for eight hundred pounds.

Sir Oli. You will not let Oliver go?

Charles. Zounds! no, I tell you once more.

Sir Oli. Then never mind the difference—we'll balance another time; but, give me your hand on the bargain: you are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon for being so free; come, Moses.

Charles. Egad this is a whimsical old fellow! But, harkee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen?

Sir Oli. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Charles. But hold—do now send a genteel conveyance for them, for I assure you they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oli. I will, I will, for all but—Oliver.

Charles. Aye, all but the little nabob.

Sir Oli. You're fixed!

Charles. Peremptorily.

Sir Oli. A dear extravagant rogue—good day—
Come, Moses; let me hear now who dares call him
profligate. [*Exeunt SIR OLIVER and MOSES.*]

Care. Why this is the oddest genius of the sort I
ever saw.

Charles. Egad he's the prince of brokers, I think, I
wonder how the devil Moses got acquainted with so
honest a fellow? but hark! here's Rowley, do Careless
say I'll join the company in a moment.

Care. I will. But don't now let that old blockhead
persuade you to squander any of that money on old
musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen,
Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Charles. Very true, and paying them is only encour-
aging them.

Care. Nothing else.

Charles. Aye, aye, never fear. [*Exit CARELESS.*]
Soh! this was an odd old fellow indeed—let me see
—two thirds of this, five hundred and thirty odd
pounds are mine by right. Fore heaven I find one's
ancestors are more valuable relations than I took
them for! ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient
and very grateful humble servant.

Enter ROWLEY.

Ha! old Rowley,—egad you are just come in time
to take leave of your old acquaintance.

Row. Yes, I heard they were going, but I wonder
you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

Charles. Why there's the point, my distresses are
so many that I can't afford to part with my spirits,—
but I shall be rich and splenetie all in good time—
however I suppose that you are surprized that I am
not more sorrowful at parting with so many near re-
lations, to be sure 'tis very affecting, but rot 'em, you
see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

Row. There's no making you serious a moment.

Charles. Yes, faith I am so now, here my honest Rowley, here get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

Row. A hundred pounds!—consider only—

Charles. Gad's life don't talk about—poor Stanley's wants are pressing; and if you don't make haste, we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Row. Ah! there's the point—I never will cease dunning you with the old poverb—

Charles. “Be just before you're generous;” hey! why so I would if I could, but justice is an old lame hobbling beldam; and I can't get her to keep pace with generosity for the soul of me.

Row. Yet Charles believe me one hour's reflection—

Charles. Aye, aye, it is very true—but, harkee, Rowley, while I have, by heaven I will give—so damn your œconomy, and now for hazard. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Parlour.

Enter SIR OLIVER and MOSES.

Moses. Well Sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oli. True; but he wouldn't sell my picture.

Moses. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oli. But he wouldn't sell my picture.

Moses. And games so deep.

Sir Oli. But he wouldn't sell my picture—Oh, here's Rowley.

Enter ROWLEY.

Row. O Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase.

Sir Oli. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Row. And here has he commissioned me to re-deliver you a part of the purchase-money, I mean the in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

Moses. Ah ! there is the pity of all, he's so damned charitable.

Row. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who I'm sure won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

Sir Oli. Well, well, I'll pay his debts and his benevolence too—but now I'm no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the brother as old Stanley.

Row. Not yet a while; Sir Peter I know means to call there about this time.

Enter TRIP.

Trip. O Gentlemen I beg pardon for not shewing you out—This way, gentlemen; Moses, a word—

[Exeunt TRIP and MOSES.]

Sir Oli. There's a fellow for you; would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Row. Indeed!

Sir Oli. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business—Ah, Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters when they were worn a little thread-bare; but now they have their vices like their birth-day cloaths, with the gloss on.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A Library.

JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT.

Jos. Sur. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Ser. No, Sir.

Jos. Sur. I am surprized she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me: yet I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself in with the wife. However Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favour.

Ser. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Jos. Sur. Hold! See whether it is or not before you go to the door; I have a particular message for you, if it should be my brother.

Ser. 'Tis her ladyship, Sir, she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.—

Jos. Sur. Stay, stay, draw that screen before the window, that will do,—my opposite neighbour is a maiden lady of a curious temper.

[*SERVANT draws the Screen, and Exit.*]

I have a difficult hand to play in this affair; Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret, at least 'till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE.

Lady T. What! sentiment in soliloquy—have you been very impatient now? O hnd, don't pretend to look grave—I vow I couldn't come before.

Jos. Sur. O Madam! punctuality is a species of constancy—very unfashionable quality in a lady.

Lady T. Upon my word you ought to pity me, do you know that Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured of late, and so jealous of Charles too; that's the best of the story, isn't it?

Jos. Sur. I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up. (*aside*)

Lady T. I'm sure I wish he would let Maria marry him; and then perhaps he would be convinced—don't you, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Sur. Indeed I do not. (*aside*) O certainly I do; for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady T. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you; but isn't it provoking to have the most ill-natured things said to one. There is my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't how many scandalous tales of me; and all without any foundation too—that's what vexes me.

Jos. Sur. Aye, Madam, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation; yes, yes, there's the mortification indeed: for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady T. No to be sure; then I'd forgive their malice—but to attack *me*, who am really so innocent; and who never say an ill-natured thing of any body; that is of my friends—and then Sir Peter too to have him so peevish, and so suspicious—when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed 'tis monstrous.

Jos. Sur. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her; the original compact is broke, and she owes it to the honour of her sex to endeavour to outwit him.

Lady T. Indeed! so that if he suspects me without cause, it follows that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't?

Jos. Sur. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you; and in that case it becomes *you* to become frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady T. To be sure what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my own innocence—

Jos. Sur. Ah, my dear Madam, there is the great mistake—'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms and careless of the world's opinion? Why the consciousness of your innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudencies? Why the consciousness of your innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions? Why the consciousness of your own innocence.

Lady T. 'Tis very true.

Jos. Sur. Now my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling faux-pas, you can't conceive

how cautious you would grow; and how ready to humour and agree with your husband.

Lady T. Do you think so?

Jos. Sur. O I am sure on't; and then you'd find all scandal would cease at once—for in short your character at present is like a person in a plethora—absolutely dying of too much health.

Lady T. Why if my understanding were once convinced——

Jos. Sur. O certainly, Madam; your understanding *should* be convinced—yes, yes, heaven forbid, I should persuade you to do any thing you thought wrong—no, no, I have too much honour to desire it.

Lady T. Don't you think we may as well leave honour out of the argument.

Jos. Sur. Ah! the ill effects of your country education I see still remain with you.

Lady T. I doubt they do, indeed; and I will fairly own to you that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your honourable logic after all.

Jos. Sur. Then by this hand which he is unworthy of—— (*Enter SERVANT*) 'Sdeath, you blockhead, what do you want?

Serv. I beg pardon, Sir, but I thought you wouldn't choose Sir Peter's coming up stairs without announcing him.

Jos. Sur. Sir Peter—oons! and the devil.

Lady T. Sir Peter!—O lud, I'm ruin'd! I'm ruin'd!

Serv. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady T. Oh! I'm undone—what will become of me now Mr. Logic? O mercy, he's on the stairs! I'll get behind here; and if ever I'm so imprudent again!

[*Goes behind the screen.*]

Jos. Sur. Give me a book.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir Pet. Aye; ever improving himself—Mr. Surface! Mr. Surface!

Jos. Sur. O my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon, (*gaping and throwing away the book*) I have been dozing over a stupid book—well I am much obliged to you for this call: you have not been here I believe since I fitted up this room. Books you know are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Pet. 'Tis very neat indeed; well, well, that's proper—and you make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive with maps.

Jos. Sur. O yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Pet. I dare say you must certainly, when you want to find any thing in a hurry.

Jos. Sur. Aye, or to hide any thing in a hurry either. (*aside*)

Sir Pet. Well, I have a little private business.

Jos. Sur. You needn't stay.

Serv. No Sir.

[*Exit.*

Jos. Sur. Here's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg—

Sir Pet. Well now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburthen my mind to you; a point of the greatest moment to my peace—in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me very unhappy.

Jos. Sur. Indeed, I am sorry to hear it.

Sir Pet. Yes, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard for me, but what's worse! have pretty good authority to suppose that she must have formed an attachment to another.

Jos. Sur. Indeed! you astonish me!

Sir Pet. Yes, and between ourselves, I think I have discovered the person.

Jos. Sur. How! you alarm me exceedingly!

Sir Pet. Ah, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

Jos. Sur. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would distress me just as much as it would you.

Sir Pet. I am convinced of it—Ah, it is a happiness to have a friend whom one can trust even with one's family secrets—but have you no guess who I mean?

Jos. Sur. I hav'n't the most distant idea—it can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite?

Sir Pet. O no—what say you to Charles?

Jos. Sur. My brother! Impossible!

Sir Pet. It's very true.

Jos. Sur. O no Sir Peter—you must not credit the scandalous insinuation you hear. No, no, Charles to be sure has been charged many things of this kind, but I can never think he could meditate so gross an injury.

Sir Pet. Ah, my dear friend! the goodness of your own heart misleads you—you judge of others by yourself.

Jos. Sur. Certainly, Sir Peter—the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's baseness.

Sir Pet. True—but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

Jos. Sur. Yet I can't but think that Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

Sir Pet. Aye, but what's her principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively, young fellow.

Jos. Sur. That's very true.

Sir Pet. And then you know the difference of our ages makes it highly improbable that she should have any violent affection for me, and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me—The foolish old batchelor who who had married a girl.

Jos. Sur. That's true, to be sure they would laugh.

Sir Pet. Laugh, aye, and make ballads and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Jos. Sur. No, you must never make it public.

Sir Pet. But then again, that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to do such a wrong, hurts one more nearly.—

Jos. Sur. Aye there's the point: when ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Pet. Aye, I that was in a manner left his guardian, in whose house he has been so often entertained, who never in my life denied him—my advice.

Jos. Sur. O 'tis not to be credited, there may be a man capable of such baseness to be sure, but for my part 'till you can give me positive proofs I cannot but doubt it, however if this should be proved on him he is no longer a brother of mine; I disclaim kindred with him—for the man who can break through the laws of hospitality, and attempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Pet. What a difference there is between you! what noble sentiments!

Jos. Sur. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

Sir Pet. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us; she has lately reproached me more than once, with having made no settlement on her, and in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she would not break her heart if I was dead, now as we seem to differ in our ideas of expence, I have resolved she shall be her own mistress in that respect for the future, and if I were to die, she shall find that I have not been inattentive to her interests while living, here my friend are the draughts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on; by one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year, independent, while I live; and by the other the bulk of my fortune after my death.

Jos. Sur. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous! I wish it may not corrupt my pupil. (*aside*)

Sir Pet. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain; though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet a-while.

Jos. Sur. Nor I, if I could help it.

Sir Pet. And now, my dear friend, if you please we will talk oyer the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Jos. Sur. No, no, Sir Peter; another time if you please.

Sir Pet. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections—

Jos. Sur. I beg you will not mention it, Sir—what are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate. (*softly*) 'Sdeath I shall be ruined every way.

Sir Pet. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion, I am sure she is not your enemy in the affair.

Jos. Sur. Pray, Sir Peter, oblige me—I am really too much affected by the subject we have been talking to bestow a thought on my own concerns—The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses—can never—well Sir—

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Your brother, Sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

Jos. Sur. 'Sdeath! blockhead, I am not within, I am out for the day.

Sir Pet. Stay, hold, a thought has struck me—you shall be at home.

Jos. Sur. Well, well, let him up. [*Exit SERVANT.* He'll interrupt Sir Peter however. (*aside.*)]

Sir Pet. Now my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you, before Charles comes let me conceal myself somewhere, then do you tax him on the point we have been talking on, and his answers may satisfy me at once.

Jos. Sur. O fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick—to trepan my brother too—

Sir Pet. Nay, you tell me you are sure he's innocent, if so, you do him the greatest service in giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest, come you shall not refuse me—here behind this screen will be—hey! what the devil!—there seems to be one listener here already—I'll swear I saw a petticoat.

Jos. Sur. Ha! ha! ha! well this is ridiculous enough; I'll tell you Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet you know it does not follow that one is to be an absolute

Joseph either,—harkee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me, and having some character, on your coming in she ran behind the screen.

Sir Pet. Ah, you rogue, but egad she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Jos. Sur. O 'twill never go any farther you may depend on't.

Sir Pet. No! then ifaith let her hear it out, here's a closet will do as well.

Jos. Sur. Well, go in then.

Sir Pet. Sly rogue, sly rogue! [*goes into the closet.*]

Jos. Sur. A narrow escape indeed, and a curious situation I am in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady T. Couldn't I steal off. [*peeping out.*]

Jos. Sur. Keep close my angel.

Sir Pet. Joseph tax him home. [*peeping out.*]

Jos. Sur. Back my dear friend.

Lady T. Could'nt you lock Sir Peter in?

Jos. Sur. Lie still my life.

Sir Pet. You are sure the little milliner won't blab?

Jos. Sur. In, in, my dear Sir Peter. Foregad I wish I had a key to the door.

Enter CHARLES.

Charles. Holla, brother! what has been the matter? your fellow wouldn't let me up at first; what! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Jos. Sur. Neither brother I assure you.

Charles. And what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Jos. Sur. He was, brother; but hearing you were coming, he did not chuse to stay.

Charles. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Jos. Sur. No, Sir; but I am sorry to find Charles, that you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Charles. Yes, yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men, but how so pray?

Jos. Sur. To be plain with you brother, he thinks you are endeavouring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Charles. Who I? O lud! nòt I upon my 'word, ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?

Jos. Sur. This is no subject to jest upon, brother, he who can laugh—

Charles. True, true, as you were going to say—then seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Jos. Sur. Well, well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear it.

Charles. To be sure I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me, but upon my soul I never gave the least encouragement,—besides you know my attachment to Maria.

Jos. Sur. But sure brother, if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you—

Charles. Why look ye Joseph; I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonourable action—but if a pretty woman were purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father—

Jos. Sur. Well !

Charles. Why, I believe, I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality; that's all—but, brother, do you know now that you surprize me exceedingly by naming me with Lady Teazle, for 'faith I always understood you were her favourite.

Jos. Sur. For shame Charles, this retort is foolish.

Charles. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances.

Jos. Sur. Nay, nay Sir, this is no jest.

Charles. Egad I'm serious, don't you remember one day when I called here—

Jos. Sur. Nay, pr'ythee Charles—

Charles. And found you together—

Jos. Sur. Zounds Sir! I insist—

Charles. And another time when your servant—

Jos. Sur. Brother, brother, a word with you—
Gad I must stop him. *(aside.)*

Charles. Informed me I say that——

Jos. Sur. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying, I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

Charles. How! Sir Peter! where is he?

Jos. Sur. Softly—there. *[points to the closet.]*

Charles. Oh! 'fore Heaven I'll have him out.—Sir Peter come forth.

Jos. Sur. No, no.

Charles. I say, Sir Peter, come into court—*(pulls in Sir Peter)* What, my old guardian! what! turned inquisitor, and taking evidence incog?

Sir Pet. Give me your hand, Charles; I believe I have suspected you wrongfully—but you mustn't be angry with Joseph—'twas my plan.

Charles. Indeed!

Sir Pet. But I acquit you—I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did—What I have heard has given me great satisfaction,

Charles. Egad then! 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more—wasn't it Joseph?

Sir Pet. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Charles. Ay, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, I know his honour too well.

Charles. But you might as well have suspected *him* as me in this matter for all that—mightn't he Joseph?

Sir Pet. Well, well, I believe you.

Jos. Sur. I wish they were both well out of the room. *(aside)*

Sir Pet. And in future perhaps we may not be such strangers.

Enter SERVANT, who speaks to JOSEPH SURFACE.

Serv. Sir, Lady Sneerwell is below, and says she will come up.

Jos. Sur. *(to the Servant)* Lady Sneerwell—Gad's life! she musn't come here. Gentlemen, I beg pardon—I must wait on you down stairs—here is a person come on particular business.

Charles. Well, well, you can see him in another room; Sir Peter and I have not met for a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Jos. Sur. They must not be left together—I'll send Lady Sneerwell away directly. Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Pet. O not for the world! (*Exit Jos. SURFACE*) Ah Charles, you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment—well there's nothing so noble as a man of sentiment!

Charles. Pshaw, he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a wench.

Sir Pet. No, no; come, come, you wrong him—no, no, Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint in that respect either. I have a great mind to tell him; we should have such a laugh. (*aside*)

Charles. O hang him! he's a very anchorite—a young hermit!

Sir Pet. Hark ye, you must not abuse him—he may chance to hear of it again I promise.

Charles. Why you won't tell him?

Sir Pet. No—but—this way—egad I'll tell him—hark ye, have you a mind to have a good laugh against Joseph?

Charles. I should like it of all things.

Sir Pet. Then faith we will—I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called. (*whispers*)

Charles. What, Joseph! you jest.

Sir Pet. Hush! a little French milliner—and the best of the jest is—she's in the room now.

Charles. The devil she is! (*looking at the closet*)

Sir Pet. Hush! I tell you—(*points to the screen*)

Charles. Behind the screen—odd's life! let us unveil her?

Sir Pet. No, no, he's coming; you shan't indeed.

Charles. O egad we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

Sir Pet. No, not for the world—Joseph will never forgive me.

Charles. I'll stand by you.

Sir Pet. Odd's life! here he is.

[JOSEPH enters as CHARLES throws down the screen.]

Charles. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

Charles. Sir Peter; this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw—Egad you seem all to have been diverting yourselves at hide and seek; and I don't see who is out of the secret—Shall I beg your Ladyship to inform me? not a word! Brother will you please to explain this matter? What is morality dumb too? Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now—all mute! well though I can make nothing of this affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I shall leave you to yourselves. (*going*) Brother, I am sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness. Sir Peter, there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! [Exit CHARLES.]

Jos. Sur. Sir Peter, notwithstanding I confess that appearances are against me, if you will afford me your patience, I make no doubt, but I shall explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Sir Pet. If you please, Sir.

Jos. Sur. The fact is, Sir—that Lady Teazle knowing my pretensions to your ward, Maria—I say, Sir, Lady Teazle being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper, and knowing my friendship to the family—she Sir, I say called here, in order that I might explain those pretensions—but on your coming, being apprehensive as I said of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this you may depend on't is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Pet. A very clear account upon my word, and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

Lady T. For not one word of it, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. How! don't you even think it worth while to agree in the lie?

Lady T. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Pet. I believe you, upon my soul, Madam.

Jos. Sur. 'Sdeath, Madam, will you betray me?

Lady T. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave: I will speak for myself.

Sir Pet. Aye, let her alone, Sir; you'll find she'll make a better story than you without prompting.

Lady T. Hear me, Sir Peter; I came hither on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her: but I came here seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honour to his baseness.

Sir Pet. Now I believe the truth is coming indeed.

Jos. Sur. The woman's mad.

Lady T. No Sir, she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means.—
Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me: but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I'm sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has penetrated so to my heart, that had I left the place without the shame of the discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smoothed tongue hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward, I behold him now in a light so truly despicable, that I never again shall respect myself for having listened to him. *[Exit.]*

Jos. Sur. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, heaven knows——

Sir Pet. That you are a villain, and so I leave you to your conscience.

Jos. Sur. You are too rash, Sir Peter—you shall hear me—the man who shuts out conviction by refusing to—

Sir Pet. O, damn your sentiment! *[Exeunt.]*

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

*A Library.**Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE *and* SERVANT.

Jos. Sur. Mr. Stanley! and why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

Serv. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Jos. Sur. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations! well why don't you shew the fellow up?

Serv. I will Sir,—why Sir, it wasn't my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady— *[Exit.*

Jos. Sur. Go, fool. Sure, fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before. My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I am in a rare humour to listen to other people's distresses! I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley.—Oh, here he comes, and Rowley with him: I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face however. *[Exit.*

Enter SIR OLIVER, *and* ROWLEY.

Sir Oli. What does he avoid us? that was he? was it not?

Row. It was, Sir; but I do ult you too abruptly—his nerves are so weak, that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him, I should have gone first to break you to him.

Sir Oli. A plague of his nerves! yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking.

Row. As to his way of thinking I cannot pretend to decide, for to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom; though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oli. Yet has a string of charitable sentiments, I suppose at his fingers' ends.

Row. Or rather at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has more faith in than, that "Charity begins at home."

Sir Oli. And his I presume is of that domestic sort it never stirs abroad at all.

Row. I doubt you'll find it so; but he's coming, I must not seem to interrupt you; and you know immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

Sir Oli. True, and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Row. Without losing a moment. [*Exit ROWLEY.*]

Sir Oli. So! I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE.

Jos. Sur. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting—Mr. Stanley, I presume?

Sir Oli. At your service, Sir.

Jos. Sur. Sir, I beg you will do me the honour to sit down. I entreat you Sir.

Sir Oli. Dear Sir, there's no occasion. Too civil by half. (*aside*)

Jos. Sur. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well—you were nearly related to my mother, Mr. Stanley, I think?

Sir Oli. I was, Sir; so nearly that my present poverty I fear may do discredit to her wealthy children; else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Jos. Sur. Dear Sir, there needs no apology—He that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I'm sure I wish I

was of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oli. If your uncle Sir Oliver was here, I should have a friend.

Jos. Sur. I wish he was, Sir, with all my heart—you should not want an advocate with him believe me Sir.

Sir Oli. I should not need one, my distresses would recommend me, but I imagined his bounty had enabled you to become the agent of his charity.

Jos. Sur. My dear Sir, you are strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy sort of a man—but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of the age: I will tell you, my good Sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing, though people I know have thought otherwise; and for my part, I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oli. What! has he never transmitted you, bullion, rupees, pagodas?

Jos. Sur. O dear Sir! nothing of the kind, no, no, a few presents now and then, china, shawls, congo-tea, avadavats, and India crackers, little more, believe me.

Sir Oli. Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds! avadavats and India crackers!

Jos. Sur. Then my dear Sir, you have heard I doubt not of the extravagance of my brother, there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oli. Not I for one. (*aside.*)

Jos. Sur. The sums I have lent him.—Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame—it was an amiable weakness however—I don't pretend to defend it—and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the power of serving you Mr. Stanley, as my heart directs.

Sir Oli. Dissembler! Then sir, you cannot assist me.

Jos. Sur. At present it grieves me to say I cannot; but whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

Sir Oli. I am extremely sorry——

Jos. Sur. Not more than I am believe me; to pity without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

Sir Oli. Kind Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Jos. Sur. You leave me deeply affected Mr. Stanley; William be ready to open the door.

Sir Oli. Oh dear Sir! no ceremony.

Jos. Sur. Your very obedient.

Sir Oli. Sir, your most obsequious.

Jos. Sur. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oli. Sweet Sir, you are too good.

Jos. Sur. In the mean time I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oli. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

Jos. Sur. Sir, yours as sincerely.

Sir Oli. Now I'm satisfied. [*Exit SIR OLIVER.*]

Jos. Sur. This is one of the bad effects of a good character—it invites application from the unfortunate—and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expence. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities: whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a shew and pays no tax.

Enter ROWLEY.

Row. Mr. Surface, your servant—I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

Jos. Sur. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley—a rascal! (*aside*) How! Sir Oliver Surface, my uncle, arrived!

Row. He is indeed—we have just parted—quite well after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

Jos. Sur. I am astonished! William, stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone,

Row. Oh he's out of reach I believe,

Jos. Sur. Why didn't you let me know this, when you came in together?

Row. I thought you had particular business, but I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet his uncle—he will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

Jos. Sur. So he says—well, I'm strangely overjoyed at his coming—never was any thing to be sure so damned unlucky. (*aside*)

Row. You will be delighted to see how well he looks,

Jos. Sur. O I am rejoiced to hear it—Just at this time. (*aside*)

Row. I'll tell him how impatient you expect him.

[*Exit ROWLEY.*]

Jos. Sur. (solus) Do. do; pray give my best duty and affection—Indeed I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him. Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill fortune.

[*Exit JOSEPH SURFACE.*]

SCENE II.

Sir Peter Teazle's House.

Enter MRS. CANDOUR and MAID.

Maid. Indeed Ma'am, my Lady will see nobody at present.

Mrs. Can. Did you tell her it was her friend, Mrs. Candour?

Maid. Yes, Ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

Mrs. Can. Do go again—I shall be glad to see her only for a moment; for I'm sure she must be in great distress. [*Exit MAID.*] Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances—we shall have the whole affair in the news-papers with the names of the parties at full length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

O dear, Sir Benjamin! you have heard I suppose——

Sir Ben. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Can. And Sir Peter's discovery.

Sir Ben. O the strangest piece of business to be sure!

Mrs. Can. Well, I never was so surprized in my life—I am sorry for all parties indeed!

Sir Ben. Now I don't pity Sir Peter at all; he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Can. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

Sir Ben. No such thing—Mr. Surface is the gallant.

Mrs. Can. No, no, Charles is the man—'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

Sir Ben. I tell you I have it from one——

Mrs. Can. And I have it from one——

Sir Ben. Who had it from one—who had it——

Mrs. Can. From one immediately—but here's Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

Lady Sneer. So my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Teazle.

Mrs. Can. Aye, my dear friend, who could have thought it.

Lady Sneer. Well, there's no trusting to appearances, though indeed she was always too lively for me.

Mrs. Can. To be sure her manners were a little too free; but she was very young.

Lady Sneer. And had indeed some good qualities.

Mrs. Can. She had indeed—but have you heard the particulars?

Lady Sneer. No, but every body says that Mr. Surface——

Sir Ben. Aye there I told you, Mr. Surface was the man.

Mrs. Can. No, no indeed, the assignation was with Charles.

Lady Sneer. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour.

Mrs. Can. Yes, yes, he was the lover; Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

Sir Ben. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not—

Mrs. Can. Sir Peter's wound! O mercy, I did not hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneer. Nor I a syllable.

Sir Ben. No! what no mention of the duel!

Mrs. Can. Not a word,

Sir Ben. O Lord! yes, yes, they fought before they left the room.

Lady Sneer. Pray let us hear?

Mrs. Can. Aye, do oblige us with the duel?

Sir Ben. Sir, says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, you are a most ungrateful fellow,—

Mrs. Can. Aye, to Charles.

Sir Ben. No, no, to Mr. Surface.—A most ungrateful fellow, and old as I am, Sir, says he, I insist on immediate satisfaction.

Mrs. Can. Aye, that must have been to Charles, for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should go fight in his own house.

Sir Ben. Gad's life Madam, not at all.—Giving me immediate satisfaction, on this, Madam, Lady Teazle seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room, in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling for hartshorn and water; then Madam, they began to fight with swords—

Enter CRABTREE.

Crab. With pistols, nephew, I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Can. O! Mr. Crabtree, then its all true.

Crab. Too true indeed, Ma'am, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Sir Ben. By a thrust in seagoon, quite through his left side.

Crab. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Can. Mercy on me, poor Sir Peter!

Crab. Yes, Ma'am, though Charles would have avoided the matter if he could.

Mrs. Can. I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Ben. My uncle, I see knows nothing of the matter.

Crab. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

Sir Ben. That I told you—you know.

Crab. Do, nephew let me speak; and insisted on immediate satisfaction.

Sir Ben. Just as I said.

Crab. Odds life! Nephew allow others to know something too—a pair of pistols lay on the bureau, (for Mr. Surface it seems had come the night before late from Salt-hill where he had been to see the Montem with a friend who has a son at Eton) so unluckily the pistols were left charged.

Sir Ben. I heard nothing of this.

Crab. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired it seems pretty nearly together; Charles's shot took place as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed: but what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the chimney-piece, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the post-man who was just coming to the door with a double-letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Ben. My uncle's account is more circumstantial I must confess—but I believe mine is the true one for all that.

Lady Sneer. I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information. [*Exit.*]

Sir Ben. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crab. Yes, yes, they certainly do say—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Can. But pray where is Sir Peter at present?

Crab. Oh, they brought him home, and he is now in the house, tho' the servants are ordered to keep him

Mrs. Can. I believe so, and Lady Teazle I suppose attending him.

Crab. Yes, yes, I saw one of the Faculty enter just before me.

Sir Ben. Hey! Who comes here?

Crab. Oh this is he!—Physician depend on't.

Mrs. Can. O certainly it must be the Physician—and now we shall know.

Enter SIR OLIVER.

Crab. Well Doctor, what hopes?

Mrs. Can. Aye Doctor, how's your patient?

Sir Ben. Now Doctor, isn't it a wound with a small sword?

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax for a hundred.

Sir Oli. Doctor! a wound with a small sword! and a bullet in the thorax! what are you mad, good people?

Sir Ben. Perhaps, Sir, you are not a doctor?

Sir Oli. Truly I am to thank you for my degrees, if I am.

Crab. Only a friend of Sir Peter's then I presume, but, Sir, you must have heard of his accident?

Sir Oli. Not a word.

Crab. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

Sir Oli. The devil he is?

Sir Ben. Run through the body!

Crab. Shot in the breast.

Sir Ben. By one Mr. Surface,

Crab. Ay, by the younger.

Sir Oli. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts. However you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded?

Sir Ben. O yes; we agree in that.

Crab. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

Sir Oli. Then upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive, for here he comes walking, as if nothing at all was the matter.

Enter SIR PETER.

Odd's heart! Sir Peter, you are come in good time, I promise you; for we had just given you over.

Sir Ben. Egad uncle, this is the most sudden recovery—

Sir Oli. Why, man, what do you do out of your bed, with a small sword through your body and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

Sir Pet. A small sword and a bullet?

Sir Oli. Ay, these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic; and wanted to dub me a doctor to make me an accomplice.

Sir Pet. Why, what is all this?

Sir Ben. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortunes.

Sir Pet. So, it's all over the town already.

Crab. Though Sir Peter you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at all at your years.

Sir Pet. What business is that of yours, Sir?

Mrs. Can. Though indeed as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

Sir Pet. Plague on your pity, Ma'am—I desire none of it.

Sir Ben. However, Sir Peter, you musn't mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

Sir Pet. Sir, I desire to be master of my own house.

Crab. 'Tis no uncommon case—that's one comfort.

Sir Pet. I insist on being left to myself; without ceremony, I insist on your leaving my house directly.

Mrs. Can. Well, well we are going—and depend on't we'll make the best report of you we can.

Sir Pet. Leave my house.

Crab. And tell how hard you have been treated.

Sir Pet. Leave my house.

Sir Ben. And how patiently you bear it.

Sir Pet. Leave my house—

[*Exeunt MRS. CANBOUR, SIR BEN. and CRABTREE.*]

Sir Pet. Fiends! Vipers! Furies! Oh that their own venom would choak them.

Sir Oli. They are very provoking indeed, Sir Peter.

Enter ROWLEY.

Row. I heard high words—what has ruffled you, Sir Peter?

Sir Pet. Pshaw! what signifies asking—do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Sir Oli. Well, I'm not inquisitive.—I come only to tell you that I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Pet. A precious couple they are!

Row. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oli. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man after all.

Row. Aye, as Sir Peter says, he's a man of sentiment.

Sir Oli. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Row. It's certainly edification to hear him talk!

Sir Oli. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age! but how's this, Sir Peter, you don't join in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Row. What do you say so Sir Peter, who never were mistaken in your life?

Sir Pet. Pshaw! plague on you both—I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair—I shall go mad among you.

Row. Then to fret you no longer Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's, so humbled that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Pet. And does Sir Oliver know all to?

Sir Oli. Every circumstance.

Sir Pet. What of the closet—and the screen? hey!

Sir Oli. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner!

O I have been vastly diverted with the story—ha! ha!

Sir Pet. 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oli. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you, ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. O vastly diverting! ha! ha! ha!

Row. To be sure Joseph with his sentiments—
ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, his sentiments—ha! ha! ha! a hypocritical villain!

Sir Oli. Aye, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet—ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Ha! ha!—'twas devilish entertaining to be sure.

Sir Oli. Ha! ha! egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down—ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down—ha! ha! Oh I must never shew my head again.

Sir Oli. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither my old friend, though upon my soul I can't help it.

Sir Pet. O pray don't restrain your mirth on my account; it doesn't hurt me at all—I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintances, a very happy situation.—O yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Lady T. and Sir P. will be so entertaining. I shall certainly leave town to-morrow, and never look mankind in the face again.

Row. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools; but I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as much as she does.

Sir Oli. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you; well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you—but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning—if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy. [*Exit.*]

Sir Pet. Ah! I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart, though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

Row. We'll follow.

Sir Pet. She's not coming here you see, Rowley.

Row. No; but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive—she's in tears.

Sir Pet. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife—don't you think 'twill do her good to let her pine a little?

Row. Oh! this is ungenerous in you.

Sir Pet. Well, I know not what to think, you remember Rowley the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles.

Row. O mere forgery, Sir Peter, laid in your way on purpose; this is one of the points I intend Snake shall give you conviction on.

Sir Pet. I wish I was once satisfied of that—she looks this way—what a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has—Rowley, I'll go to her.

Row. Certainly.

Sir Pet. Though when 'tis known we are reconciled people will laugh at me ten times more.

Row. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by shewing you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Pet. I faith so I will; and if I am not mistaken we may be the happiest couple in the country.

Row. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion—

Sir Pet. Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter any thing like a sentiment—I have had enough of *them* to serve me the rest of my life.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Library.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE *and* LADY SNEERWELL.

Lady Sneer. Impossible! will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles? and of consequence no longer oppose his union with Maria—the thought is distraction to me.

Jos. Sur. Can passion furnish a remedy?

Lady Sneer. No, nor cunning either—O I was a fool! an idiot! to league with such a blunderer.

Jos. Sur. Sure Lady Sneerwell I am the greatest sufferer—Yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

Lady Sneer. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart—your interest only attached you to Maria—had you felt for her what I have felt for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your shewing the sharpness of your vexation.

Jos. Sur. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

Lady Sneer. Are you not the cause of it? What had you to do to hate in your pursuit of Maria, to pervert Lady Teazle by the way? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in blinding Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother—I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly and never prospers.

Jos. Sur. Well I admit I have been to blame; I confess I have deviated from the direct road of wrong—but I don't think we are so totally defeated either.

Lady Sneer. No!

Jos. Sur. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met; and that you still believe him faithful to us?

Lady Sneer. I do believe so.

Jos. Sur. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honour to your Ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support.

Lady Sneer. This indeed might have assisted.

Jos. Sur. Come, come, it is not too late yet—But hark! (*knocking*) this is probably my uncle Sir Oliver; retire to that room, and we'll consult farther when he's gone.

Lady Sneer. I have no diffidence of your abilities; only be constant to one roguery at a time. [*Exit*]

Jos. Sur. I will, I will—so, 'tis confounded hard after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil—well, at all events my character is so much better than Charles's, that I certainly—Hey! what! this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again—Plague on't that he should return to tease me, just now. We shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here, and——

Enter SIR OLIVER.

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay upon my word.

Sir Oli. Sir, I hear your uncle Sir Oliver is expected here; and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he will do for me.

Jos. Sur. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now—So I must beg you—Come any other time, and I promise you you shall be assisted.

Sir Oli. No—Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Jos. Sur. Zounds Sir, then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oli. Nay, Sir——

Jos. Sur. Sir I insist on't—here William—Shew this gentleman out, since you compel me, Sir—not one moment—this is such insolence——

Enter CHARLES.

Charles. Heyday! what's the matter? what the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, don't hurt little Premium! what's the matter my little fellow?

Jos. Sur. So he has been with you too, has he?

Charles. To be sure he has, why 'tis as as honest a little—but sure Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Jos. Sur. Borrowing! no—but brother, you know here we expect Sir Oliver every——

Charles. O gad! that's true, Noll musn't find the little broker here to be sure.

Jos. Sur. Yet Mr. Stanley insists——

Charles. Stanley ! why his name is Premium.

Jos. Sur. No, no, Stanley.

Charles. No, no, Premium.

Jos. Sur. Well, no matter which—but——

Charles. Aye, aye, Stanley, or Premium, 'tis the same thing as you say, for I suppose he goes by half an hundred names, besides A and B at the coffee-house.

Jos. Sur. 'Sdeath ! here's Sir Oliver at the door.
(knocking) now I beg Mr. Stanley—

Charles. Aye, aye, and I beg Mr. Premium—

Sir Oli. Gentlemen——

Jos. Sur. Sir, by heaven you shall go,

Charles. Aye, out with him certainly.

Sir Oli. This violence——

Jos. Sur. 'Tis your own fault.

Charles. Out with him to be sure.

[both forcing SIR OLIVER out.]

Enter SIR PETER, LADY TEAZLE, MARIA & ROWLEY.

Sir Pet. My old friend, Sir Oliver, hey ! what in the name of wonder ! here are dutiful nephews ! assault their uncle at the first visit.

Lady T. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

Row. Truly it was, for I perceive Sir Oliver the character of old Stanley was not a protection to you.

Sir Oli. No, nor of Premium either ; the necessities of the former couldn't extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman : and with the other I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

Jos Sur. Charles !

Charles. Joseph !

Jos. Sur. 'Tis now complete.

Charles. Very.

Sir Oli. Sir Peter my friend, and Rowley too ; look on that elder nephew of mine—you know what he has already received from my bounty : and you know also

how gladly I would have regarded half my fortune, as held in trust for him—Judge then, my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude.

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprized at this declaration, if I had not myself found him to be selfish, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady T. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call me to his character.

Sir Pet. Then I believe we need add no more—if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment that he is known by the world,

Charles. If they talk this way to honesty, what will they say to me by and by?

Sir Oli. As for that prodigal his brother there——

Charles. Aye, now comes my turn—The damned family pictures will ruin me.

Jos. Sur. Sir Oliver! Uncle! If you will honour me with a hearing.

Sir Oli. Psha! (*turns from him with contempt.*)

Charles. Now if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little. (*aside.*)

Sir Oli. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely.

Jos. Sur. I trust I could.

Sir Oli. Pshaw—nay if you desert your roguery in its distress and try to be justified; you have even less principle than I thought you had. Well Sir, and you could justify yourself too I suppose. (*to Charles.*)

Charles. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oli. What, little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I presume.

Charles. True, Sir, but they were family secrets, and should never be mentioned again, you know.

Row. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oli. Odds heart! no more I can, nor with gravity either—Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors: sold me Judges,

and Generals, by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Charles. To be sure Sir Oliver I did make free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't; my ancestors may certainly rise in evidence against me, there's no denying—but believe me sincere when I tell you, and upon my soul I would not say it, if it was not; that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing *you*, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oli. Charles, I believe you, give me your hand; the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Charles. Then Sir, my gratitude to the original is still encreased.

Lady T. Yet I believe Sir Oliver, there is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to

Sir Oli. O, I have heard of his attachment there, and with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right that blush.—

Sir Pet. Well child, speak your sentiments.

Maria. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy, for me, whatever claim I had to his attention, I willingly resign it to one who has a better title.

Charles. How Maria!

Sir Pet. Heyday! what's the mystery now? while he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he's likely to reform I warrant you wont have him.

Maria. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell's, knows the cause.

Charles. Lady Sneerwell!

Jos. Sur. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point—but my regard to justice obliges me: and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. (*Goes to the door*)

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

All. Lady Sneerwell!!!

Sir Pet. Soh! another French milliner—Egad he has one in every room in the house, I suppose.

Lady Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! well may you be surprized and feel for the indelicate situation which your perfidy has forced me into.

Charles. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours, for as I have life I don't understand it.

Jos. Sur. I believe, Sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Pet. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake; Rowley you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Row. Walk in Mr. Snake.

Enter SNAKE.

I thought his testimony might be wanted, however it happens unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, and not to support her.

Lady Sneer. A villain! treacherous to me at last; speak fellow, have you conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your Ladyship ten thousand pardons: you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question: but I have unfortunately been offered double the sum to speak the truth.

Sir Pet. Plot and counterplot.

Lady Sneer. The torments of shame and disappointment on you all.

Lady T. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken in writing letters to me from Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the Scandalous College, of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her—as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneer. You too Madam—provoking—insolent—may your husband live these fifty years. *[Exit.*

Lady T. What a malicious creature it is!

Sir Pet. Hey! what, not for her last wish?

Lady T. O No.

Sir Oli. Well Sir, what have you to say now?

Jos. Sur. Sir, I am so confounded that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say, however lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly.

[Exit JOSEPH SURFACE.]

Sir Pet. Moral to the last drop.

Sir Oli. Aye, and marry her Joseph if you can, oil and vinegar; egad you'll do very well together.

Row. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present.

Snake. Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Pet. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

Sir Pet. Hey! what the plague, are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life.

Snake. Ah! Sir, consider I live by the badness of my character; I have nothing but my infamy to depend on, and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

[Exit SNAKE.]

Sir Pet. Here's a precious rogue.

Sir Oli. Well, well, we'll not traduce you by saying any thing to your praise, never fear.

Lady T. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oli. Aye, aye, that's as it should be, and egad we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Charles. Thank you my dear uncle.

Sir Pet. What you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first.

Charles. I have done that a long time, a minute ago, and she looked—yes.

Maria. For shame Charles, I protest Sir Peter there has not been a word.

Sir Oli. Well then the fewer the better—may your love for each other never know abatement.

Sir Pet. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I—intend to do.

Charles. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me, and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oli. You do indeed Charles.

Row. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded you would have been in my debt for the attempt—but deserve to be happy and you overpay me.

Sir Pet. Aye! honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Charles. Why as to reforming, Sir Peter; I'll make no promises—and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it. But here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide—ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

For thou dear maid, should'st wave thy beauty's sway.

Thou still must rule because I will obey.

An humbled fugitive from folly view—

No sanctuary near—but love and you.

You can indeed each anxious fear remove,

For even scandal dies if you approve.

[to the Audience.

THE END.

23

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A circular ink stamp from the British Museum. The words "BRITISH" and "MUSEUM" are curved along the top and bottom edges respectively. In the center, the date "8 MR 1921" is printed in a straight line.

